



March 2010

The Courier

First United Methodist Church of Canoga Park

22700 Sherman Way, West Hills, CA 91307-2396

Telephone: 818.340.2950; FAX: 818.340.2951; Preschool: 818.340.6639

fumccp@sbcglobal.net website: www.umccp.org

Join us at church Sundays at 10:00 am

Foreman's Forum

Lately I have been reflecting on death and dying in America. Garrison Keillor would be interesting to read on this subject. With wit and humor he would probably be insightful. Humor and wit are not easy for most pastors when talking about death. Keillor says that Methodists believe that it is okay to poke fun at themselves and never (seldom) take themselves too seriously.

Dying in America can be costly. In some instances hospital stays continue as long as Medicare, your private insurance and your personal finances last. Technology can keep the body functioning long after the quality of life has diminished and forestall the natural process of dying. It often becomes prolonging the act of dying rather than prolonging life. There comes a time to allow God and natural processes to continue. An advance directive by the patient can avoid prolonging the act of dying.

In a recent conversation with one of our scout leaders, whose office assists people in writing living wills and trusts, it was brought to my attention that we should periodically evaluate wills and trusts. Many people are not aware of how they can protect their home from being taken by the government for liens placed on it due to medical expenses paid by Medicaid, a need-based program for which states must repay the federal government. Should the taxpayers receive the revenue from the sale of your home, or should it go to your children and family members?

Ground burials and mausoleums are costly compared to cremations and disposal of ashes. Funeral homes sometimes charge twice as much for a casket than the same model would cost purchased online. Cemetery plots are costly but a little less expensive if you purchase one through a cemetery broker who sells lots for someone who owns a lot and wants to sell it. Pre-planning is helpful to avoid last-minute critical decisions.

Our beautiful rose garden is a witness to what a congregation can do to assist members to bury remains on sacred ground in a church setting similar to what most older churches did with cemeteries on their property. Death is a part of life. We must plan for it as we plan for life. I am still working on my plan. What about you? Methodists believe it is never too late to plan.

Faithfully Yours,

Pastor Willie



Pastor

Dr. Willie Foreman

Community Youth Pastor

Melinda T. Dodge

Preschool Director

Wendy Finley

Music Director

Dr. Pamela Blackstone

Interim Organist/Pianist

Paul Cady

Interim Administrative Assistant

Rebecca Roe

Courier Layout

Sharon Mountford



Resident Bishop

Dr. Mary Ann Swenson

District Superintendent

Rev. Cathleen Coots



March Birthdays

- 3 Connie Durham
- 9 Diana Robertson
- 10 Heidi Foreman
Steve Robertson
- 14 Gregory Yagiela
- 17 Pamela Blackstone
Helen Mackintosh
- 23 Rachel Elliott
Evelyn Heim
Linda McCabe
Anita Parrinello
- 24 Jim Paules
- 30 Kyle Finley
- 31 Byron McKibben

Anniversary

- 2 George & Karen Grengs
- 10 Gard & Darlene
Greenwood
- 21 John & Dolores Yagiela
- 26 Glen & Stacey Alourdas
- 29 Roger & Nancy Johnson



- 7 Liz Rogers, *in honor of daughter Nancy's birthday*
- 14 Helen Robertson, *in honor of family birthdays: daughter Janet, son Steve, daughter-in-law Diana and grandson Michael*
- 21 The Connolly family, *in memory of Ruth Smith*
- 28 Roger and Nancy Johnson, *in honor of their 30th wedding anniversary and Glen and Stacey Alourdas, in honor of their 22nd wedding anniversary*

March Calendar

Weekly Activities

- Sunday Peace Evangelical Church, Fellowship Hall, 9:30 am
San Fernando Valley Youth Chorus, Lounge, 4:00 pm
Hindi Urdu UMC, Sanctuary, 5:00 pm
- Tuesday Boy Scouts, Scout Room, 7:00 pm
Girl Scouts, Lounge, 7:00 pm
- Wednesday Tai Chi Class, Fellowship Hall, 10:00 am
Men's Stag AA meeting, Parlor, 7:30 pm
- Thursday Bible Study, Library, 11:00 am
Choir Practice, Choir Room, 7:30 pm

Other Activities

- Tuesday 2 Leisure Club, Lounge, 11:00 am
- Thursday 4 UMW Mission Team, Room 10, 10:00 am
MS Support Group, Lounge, 6:00 pm
- Saturday 6 Men's Fellowship Breakfast, Denny's, 8:30 am
- Tuesday 9 Administrative Committee and Outreach Committee,
Combined meeting, Library, 7:00 pm
- Saturday 13 Scrapbooking, Lounge, 3:00 pm
- Tuesday 16 Prayer Shawl Ministry, Library, 10:00 am
- Thursday 18 UMW General Meeting, Lounge, 9:30 am
- Sunday 21 Journey 401, Library, 11:30 am
- Tuesday 23 Education Ministry, Library, 7:00 pm
- Sunday 28 Palm Sunday and brunch
- Wednesday 31 Joint steering meeting, Urdu and First Church, Library,
7:00 pm

Looking Ahead

- Saturday April 3 Men's Breakfast
- Tuesday April 6 Leisure Club

Tuesday, March 2, 11:00 am, Lounge



March 2nd will find us celebrating St. Patrick's Day a little early, and listening to Frank Wilken. He will tell us about his unusual experiences during World War II. Some of us have personal memories of that period in history.

Bring a dish to share and linger for the fellowship.

Deadline for the April Courier is March 15.

UMW News

UMW Sunday

Our UMW Sunday was a very special event for our Unit. Our speaker, Doris Hood, serves on our Mission Team as Social Action/Education & Interpretation Representative. She gave a most interesting presentation on Sudan, using information from the School of Christian Mission Study.

The highlight of our day was presenting our Special Membership Award to two very special devoted members: Jane Bayless & LaDean Owen. Congratulations Ladies. We love you. *(see article on page 4)*

Mission Projects

Last month our Unit of UMW sent a check for \$100.00 for the Haiti Health Kits.

General Meeting

Thursday, March 18

beginning with coffee & fellowship at 9:30.

Pat Ferrin, Treasurer, will be leading the UMW Pledge Service.

Pastor Willie will install the 2010 Mission Team.

Come To The Table

This was the Theme of our Santa Barbara Leadership Training session last month at St. Paul's UMC in Oxnard. Five members from FUMCCP UMW Mission Team attended: Anna Bennett, Pat Ferrin, Helen Robertson, Doris Hood and Shirley Thomson. We enjoyed attending sessions pertaining to our own offices and sharing the joys and concerns of our local Unit while gathering information on how to serve our Unit better. The afternoon Worship Service was one of great fellowship, entertainment and the awarding of certificates, of which our Unit received MANY.

UMW Assembly 2010

Now is the time to make plans to attend Assembly 2010 in St. Louis, MO, April 30-May 2. The Assembly theme, Faith*Hope*Love in Action, was chosen to represent the 140 years of UMW work in Mission. Our local Prayer Shawl Ministry plans to donate a shawl to the Assembly to be either given away or sold, with the proceeds going to Missions. If you would like to know more or plan to attend please contact Helen Robertson at 818-347-4405

Spiritual Growth Retreat

There will be a one-day Spiritual Retreat for everyone in our District on Saturday, April 17 at Ventura FUMC, whose Senior Pastor, Mary Birgelaitis, will be the leader. We will car pool from our church parking lot about 7:45 am. Call Helen Robertson for more information.



Circle Meetings

Bookends

Thursday

March 11

9:30 am

Home of Jean Smith

Faith, Hope & Love

Wednesday

March 17

7:00 pm

Home of Anita

Parrinello

Sarah Circle

Thursday

March 11

9:30 am

Breakfast at Coco's



Attending Leadership Training in Oxnard last month were Shirley Thomson, Pat Ferrin, Anna Bennett, Helen Robertson and Doris Hood.

UMW Special Mission Recognition...January, 2010

Each year our UMW Unit presents Special Mission Recognition Awards to members of our church family for their service to the church. This year UMW made two awards, to Jane Bayless and LaDean Owen.

Jane was born in Honolulu where her father, a Colonel in the Army, was stationed. Her mother was a dietician. As a military family they moved through a series of assignments and commissions all over the United States. Due to a severe stroke, her father retired from the military and the family settled in Florida.

Jane attended Florida State University majoring in Home Economics; but near the end of her second year of college her mother was taken ill and Jane went home to help out.

Jane married a high school classmate who also attended Florida State. He was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force. They lived in Massachusetts when their first child was born. Living in New York and Pennsylvania, their family continued to grow to a total of 2 boys and 2 girls. Lured by more lucrative employment opportunities in Southern California they left the Air Force and moved to Canoga Park. Jane has 5 grandchildren, 3 step-granddaughters and 3 great grandchildren.

Jane completed her college education at Cal State Northridge, graduating with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She started her teaching career as a substitute for LAUSD and then was hired as a full-time kindergarten teacher. She taught in various schools in Los Angeles and the Valley for many years.



LaDean Owen was born in Oklahoma and raised in a religious environment. Her father was a Baptist minister serving in several states at various churches both large and small. He was instrumental in raising money to build the Christian Community Church in Woodland Hills.

LaDean married young and had two sons from that marriage. She raised her sons as well as a stepdaughter. While traveling in Pakistan one of her sons became ill. He subsequently went to India and passed away at the young age of 28. Several years later, after divorcing, she married a man she had known all of her life, an executive at Lockheed. They had a daughter together.

When LaDean decided to go to work, she applied for a job and was surprised when she was hired by an upscale department store in the Valley. LaDean worked there for 21 years, until the store closed. She started in the children's department, then in the men's and finally in the women's department.

When her husband became ill, she spent her time caring for him and doing gardening until he passed away. This second marriage lasted 50 years. She has four grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren.

Jane and LaDean have served their church in a variety of ways, usually involving work in the kitchen. They have made a great team for Leisure Club, One Generation Music Ministry, VBS, the UMW and Family Life. Congratulations to both of them on this well-deserved recognition.

Some Musings from your Valley Girl Pastor

Melinda Dodge

Greetings All!

Do you make lists? I certainly do. I think it runs in my family. My mom and sister are both list-makers, too. I found out after I was married that my mother-in-law is also an avid list-maker. And now, after much coercing, so is my husband. I am never really sure if I make lists because I am just so organized, or because I would never get anything done if I didn't. They are an intrinsic part of my daily existence. Here's a list that I want to share with you:

3 classrooms of students, teachers and staff from Van Nuys Middle School
Numerous dentists & their staffs across the San Fernando Valley
Manager at Walgreen's, Sherman Way & Canby
Stephanie, COSTCO Manager
FUMC Preschool Families
KOST 103.5 Promotions Team, station employees, website viewers & listeners
CSUN Fraternity
Delta Dental
Boy Scout Troop 474 & families
FedEx Employees
UsedCardboardBoxes.com
Frank, a good friend

As with all my lists, I know that I am forgetting something or someone. But, at least it's a start. And I look forward to your additions to it. Now, I am sure you are wondering, what do the items on my list have in common? What would the title of this list be? Maybe the title would be: "Invitation List to a Party for God's Love?"



This is a list of those whom we, as the church of Christ, have invited to help us serve the earthquake-devastated peoples of Haiti. All the folks on this list have contributed in some way to the Health Kit Build which was held on February 20. All of them had the opportunity to help us serve in the name of Christ. All were invited to work alongside us, witnessing our work in the name of Christ.

Praise God! May God continue to inspire us, one and all, to bring God's love to each and everyone we encounter.

A Cautionary Tale

One of our congregation reported this extremely upsetting experience recently.

We received a mid-day phone call from a person purporting to be a young, dear relative saying he found himself in an embarrassing spot in Toronto, Canada – he had been found at fault in a minor fender-bender. Damages and fines came to \$2,800. If he could not pay this within a couple of hours or so he would be moved from a holding cell, booked and jailed, which would mean he would have a record.

He knew this would cause his parents to “fall apart” if they got this news over the phone. He wanted to tell them face-to-face as soon as he got home the following evening.

They had taken out travel insurance for him so there would be no problem repaying the wired money – he had gone to Toronto to visit the son of long-time family friends, who was dying of bone cancer, and two other family friends were with him.

His billfold and cell phone had been confiscated, but he had been allowed to use his phone card to make two calls. It was important we not interrupt him because he wasn't sure how many minutes he had left on it.

He said the only way to send more than \$1,000 out of the country, due to concerns about fraud, money-laundering and terrorism, was to send it to an immediate relative, so I should tell Western Union it was for my husband traveling on family business – a counselor assigned to him had given him all this information. It was very important I not act nervous when Western Union asked me this and other questions. Would two hours be long enough? He would call back then to get the transaction number for the Western Union office in the Court House there.

A couple of things he had said I thought odd, so I asked him to tell me his mother's name but he said, “I've gotta go” and hung up.

It was a traumatic moment. Was this a scam? Was this relative's future worth risking losing \$2,800? I went to Western Union after going to the bank – it had to be in cash. Happily, I thought, I was not asked any questions, for all the way there I felt there were too many, yet still plausible,

discrepancies, etc. – and could I lie? – how could I let down this dear soul who felt he could rely on me in a dire need?

We were called in two hours. I gave him the transaction number; he asked how much it had cost to send it (\$190) so he could put that on his insurance claim too. He blessed me and I blessed him and insisted he and his parents call me as soon as he got home.

Not long after, a man identifying himself as Officer XXX called to say the money had come through but it has been “blocked” and I should go back to Western Union (or call?) to find out why and to get it unblocked before he had to officially arrest our young relative.

I asked the officer for his telephone number in case I ran into a problem there. He said he was not allowed to give it out. “Not allowed – a police station number??” He then gave it and said the operator would ring his extension. He hung up. I called the number – it was for a porno “site.”

The “officer” called again, complaining the money was still blocked. I told him he had given me a “bad” number – it was a porno number.” He became a “bully,” saying I had written it down wrong, etc. and gave me another.

I can't remember if this was all that was said and done – I am still traumatized – but I do know I called Western Union to report I thought I was the victim of a fraud. They asked me a few questions (don't remember what ones!), and gave me a new transaction number to take to Western Union for a full return of my money – in certified checks.

Several people said I should share this experience as a warning to other caring, trusting souls.

My neighbor told of a friend who said she had had the same experience a bit earlier. Sadly her \$2,800 had not been blocked, plus the next day came a call for \$2,200 because the young relative's “car had been impounded.” That was not blocked either. A third call came – this time she “suffered a memory lapse” and in response was given several abusive phrases.

A friend of my sister in New Jersey suffered the same fate. I suspect phone calls are continuing to be made. Please alert your family and friends to be aware in case they too receive such a call.



The Parent Workshop went very well last month. The subject was "How to Short-Circuit Power Struggles," and was led by Bonnie Geary, a wonderful

family therapist who has been coming to give interesting talks for many years. Any parent who has ever heard, "But I don't want to go to bed now!" or "...That's not fair!" understands exactly what a power struggle with a child can become. We thank Bonnie for donating her valuable time to come and help us get some new perspectives on an age-old issue!

We bring in professionals from Language & Speech Associates every March to provide speech, language and hearing screening services. They spend about 10 minutes with each child to determine his or her communication development and possible needs. This is provided as part of each student's registration fee, and is a valuable service for our families.

School will be closed for Easter break the week of March 29-April 2.

We'd like to thank our friend Judy Laslo for sending us a surprise check last month to help the Preschool. Our church friends continue to give us support in many ways, and we appreciate it so much. Although enrollment is down this year, we are still proud that we offer a caring, positive and safe learning environment for preschool children. First United Methodist Preschool has a long history and great track record, and we encourage you to help us by letting people know that a great little school is right here! Thanks!

Wendy & Ginger



The preschool wishes to thank our church friends for the outpouring of support for the Trike-a-thon. We had a

fun event and we raised funds to allow the preschool to waive some tuition costs.



From the Mailbox

To the congregation:

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation of my Christian family during the time of my recovery from heart surgery.

Your cards, letters, calls and visits have been deeply appreciated! This congregation need never ask, "What would Jesus do?" They know.

Lovingly, Linda McCabe

My Dear Church Family,

The Lord is so Faithful and He is Our Healer!!!!

I received news from the Surgeon that I am Cancer Free!!!!!! I am so grateful to all of you for your Constant Prayers, Your Cards, Your Meals; but most of all, for your love for me and Richard and Nathan... I will never forget all that you have done for us!! Please pray that my recovery is quick so that I can be back to the Church, praising God through the Music Ministry!!!

With Much, Much Love!

Marianne Crosby

PS. We are so very fortunate to have the wonderful ministry of Mary Mackey!!! What a blessing she is to this Body of Christ!!!!

Palm Sunday Brunch March 28

Plan to join your church family for our traditional Palm Sunday Brunch after worship.



Summer Camp Information

Due to the fire damage at Camp Colby, the camp locations have changed this year.

Younger Elementary: June 20-23 at Camp Lazy W for grades 1-3 in the fall.

Registration Fee: \$200 if received by April 15
\$220 if received April 16-June 4.

Older Elementary: June 20-26 at Camp Lazy W for grades 4-6 in the fall.

Registration Fee: \$320 if received by April 15
\$340 if received April 16-June 4.

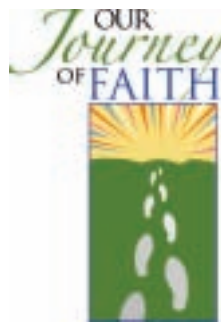
Junior & Senior High: July 4-10 at Camp Wrightwood

Jr. High entering grades 7-9 in the fall.

Sr. High entering grades 9 -12

Registration Fee: \$340 if received by May 1
\$360 if received May 2-June 18.

For further information, contact Margaret Cates or Melinda Dodge. Some financial assistance is available through the Merritt Memorial Fund of the UMW.



Christian Life And Service Seminar

Please sign up for one of these rewarding classes today! They may be the most important three to four hours you spend at First Church of Canoga Park all year long!

Each class builds on the previous one.

It is important that you take them in order.

Journey 101: Discovering My Membership

Next 101 Class: **Saturday, April 24th, 9:00 am**

Journey 201: Discovering Spiritual Maturity

Next 201 Class: **Saturday, May 22nd, 9:00 am**

Journey 301: Discovering My Ministry

Next 301 Class: **Saturday, June 12th, 9:00 am**

Journey 401: Discovering My Mission

Next 401 Class: **Sunday, March 21st, 11:30 am**

Church: www.umcp.org
Preschool: www.funp.org



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